

SPIRITUAL GROWTH CAMPAIGN 2020

MIRACLES

FOR GROUPS THAT HAVE BEEN TOGETHER SINCE STEVE POE HAD HAIR, SKIP AHEAD TO THE NEXT SECTION.

IF YOUR GROUP IS JUST STARTING OR RELATIVELY NEW, START HERE.

NEWER GROUP HOST READS OUT LOUD:

Thanks so much for coming to life group this week; for those that I don't know yet I'm legendary life group host [insert your name]. Over the next five weeks, we are going to go on a magic carpet ride of spiritual growth. To get started, think of me as a fat penguin... cuz I'm about to break the ice...

HOST READS OUT LOUD:

To have some fun and get to know each other better, we are going to play a little game! Here is how we are going to play:

- Look at the next page of images that we preselected of Pastor Steve's latest vacation. Kidding...
- Pick one of the images that you think best represents your week that you will explain why to the rest of the group.
- Wait until everyone in the group has picked an image before moving to the next part.

So that we all know how this will work, we will harken back to our days in middle school. We will be using a popcorn method to pass reading responsibility around the group. You will see prompts like the one below to help you pass the reading as the group progresses.

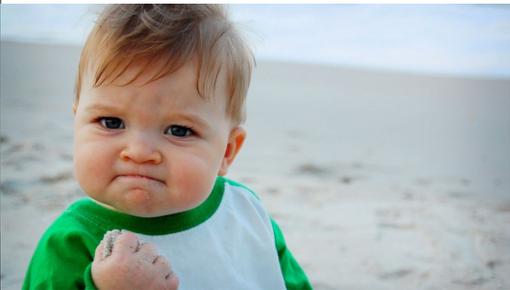
[Once everyone has their image, reading responsibility goes to the person wearing the brightest shirt.]

Way to stand out, Bright Shirt person! It was a bold choice but look how it paid off!

READ OUT LOUD:

Don't worry folks, I'm gonna start this off by saying my name and why I chose this image and making my own caption. After I'm done, we are going to go around the room starting to my right.

[Go ahead and explain yours. Make sure it's good. After everyone has a chance to go, reading responsibility goes to the last person to touch their nose.]







Don't worry, we won't tell the CDC you all just touched your face...

READ OUT LOUD:

That was great and I really feel like I know each one of you now, [pause for effect] maybe better than I know myself. [Gaze off into the distance longingly.]

Let's remember that this is a time to have fun AND to share things that really matter. Speaking of things that matter... Before we dive in, let's talk about some group ground rules so we can make the most of our time together.

Whoever reads a rule will pick someone to read the next rule until all of the ground rules have been read. I'll go first.

LIFE GROUP GROUND RULES:

1. Be a great listener. Make eye contact and don't interrupt.
2. Be real, be authentic, and trust each other.
3. Keep it confidential. Gossip is COVID-19 to a group. Too soon?
4. Share examples, not advice. Better to hear, "Oh, I experienced something like that once..." versus "Listen, here's what you need to do."
5. Show up. This group experience is best when everyone commits to being here.

[After you have read the last rule, the reading responsibility goes back to the host.]

HOST READ OUT LOUD:

For the next five weeks we are going to be talking about miracles and what things we can learn and apply to our lives today.

As Pastor Steve shared, a miracle is any time God steps into our situation. Let me say that again for the kids in the back; a miracle is any time God steps into our situation. We encounter a miracle when we are at the end of our rope or when we have hit a wall and God steps in to do what we cannot do.

- Have you ever experienced a miracle or know someone who has? What happened?
- For this next question, I'd love to go around and hear from everyone. When you hear that someone experienced a supernatural miracle, are you more likely to be initially skeptical or to accept the claim as legitimate?

[After everyone has had a chance to answer, reading responsibility goes to the person you'd vote most likely to star in their own show.]

READ OUT LOUD:

A playwright once referred to himself in The New York Times as a "foxhole Episcopalian," explaining that he "doesn't ever darken the door of a church unless something's terribly wrong."

- How do you think this approach makes God feel?
- What does it say about that person's view of God?

[After everyone has had a chance to answer, reading responsibility goes to the person most likely to bring a fish and two loaves to a party.]

READ OUT LOUD:

In the weekend services, we studied the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, which along with the resurrection, are the only two miracles that are recorded in all four gospels. The apostle John records an interesting conversation leading up to this miracle. In your Bible or app, let's read John 6:5-9 together.

(Wait until everyone has their Bible/phone in front of them and then have the last person who has their Bible/phone out read the verses.)

AFTER THE PASSAGE IS READ, CONTINUE BY READING OUT LOUD:

Of all four gospel accounts, John is the only one to tell us that Jesus tests Phillip by asking him, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" Phillip is quick to focus on what they don't have. Andrew, though skeptical, focuses on what they do have ... five loaves and two fish.

- When faced with a challenge, do you tend to focus on what is lacking or what is possible?

[Reading responsibility goes to the last person to answer.]

It's like Jesus said, "the last shall be first to read the next segment..." [wink face emoji]

READ OUT LOUD:

Place yourself in the sandals of the disciples for a moment: It has been a long day, and everyone is tired and hangry. So, the disciples make a very reasonable proposal. They recommend that Jesus send the people away so they can go to the surrounding villages to get food. But Jesus replies by telling them to do something they are incapable of doing.

In Luke 9:13, Jesus replies, "You give them something to eat." And as if that wasn't enough, next He instructs the disciples to gather the crowd of more than 20,000 men, women, and children into small groups of 50 each. Jesus was asking them to social distance before it was cool.

- What would you have been thinking and feeling if you were one of the disciples?
- What would you have told the crowd when they asked why you were doing this?

[After everyone has had a chance to answer, reading responsibility goes to someone who likes to cook for others.]

READ OUT LOUD:

Jesus breaks the bread, gives thanks and gives the food to the disciples to distribute to the people. And, the food just keeps coming to where all of the people get all of the food they want and more than 12 baskets of leftovers are collected.

- Have you ever had a time in your life when God provided for you in a way that was totally beyond what you could have hoped?
- How did it impact your faith?

[After everyone has had a chance to answer, reading responsibility goes back to the host.]

HOST READ OUT LOUD:

The apostle John tells us the rest of the story. The next day the crowd comes back in search of Jesus. When they find Him, Jesus says in John 6:26, "You've come looking for me not because you saw God in my actions but because I fed you, filled your stomachs — and for free."

Jesus goes on to tell them that He is the Bread of Life and they will never fully be satisfied until they fill themselves up with Him.

- In what ways was the crowd's response to the miracle similar to how people respond to God's provision today?

[After everyone has had a chance to answer, take time with your group to take prayer requests and pray with each other. Also remember to remind people about your next meeting details.]